



Department of Transportation

State of Georgia

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Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1002

May 4, 2007

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Ms. Yvette Taylor, FTA Region IV Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
61 Forsyth Street, Suite 17T100
Atlanta, Georgia 30277

Dear Ms. Taylor:

As required in section 450.210 of the Statewide Transportation Planning regulations, GDOT has developed a documented Public Involvement Process for use in developing the Statewide Transportation Plan and STIP. Enclosed with this transmittal is the final process that is being provided for informational purposes, as consistent with Federal regulations.

The Office of Planning developed this process, posted notification of its availability and review in newspapers throughout the State for the required 45 public comment period ending March 30, 2007. Coordination for advertising its availability was done through the Georgia Newspaper Service, an affiliate of the Georgia Press Association.

If you have any questions feel free to contact Mr. Matthew Fowler, Assistant State Transportation Planning Administrator, at 404-657-6916.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harold E. Linnenkohl".

Harold E. Linnenkohl
Commissioner

HEL:MF

Attachment



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Mr. Rodney Barry, Georgia Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
61 Forsyth Street, Suite 17T100
Atlanta, Georgia 30277
Attn.: Ms. Latoya Jones

Dear Mr. Barry:

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If you have any questions feel free to contact Mr. Matthew Fowler, Assistant State Transportation Planning Administrator, at 404-657-6916.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Harold E. Linnenkohl".

Harold E. Linnenkohl
Commissioner

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Attachment

Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) and
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
Public Involvement Process

Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Planning

May 2007

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). On February 14, 2007, FHWA and FTA jointly issued statewide and metropolitan transportation planning regulations. 23 CFR Part 450.210 requires the State to develop and document a Public Involvement Process that provides opportunities for the public to provide input during the development of the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

In summary, 23 CFR Part 450.210 requires the following:

- 1) Establish early and continuous public involvement
- 2) Provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes
- 3) Reach out to the following groups:
 - a) Citizens
 - b) Affected public agencies
 - c) Representatives of public transportation employees
 - d) Representatives of public transportation users
 - e) Private providers of transportation
 - f) Representatives of pedestrian walkway users
 - g) Representatives of bicycle facility users
 - h) Representatives of the disabled
 - i) Providers of freight transportation services
- 4) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information related to the SWTP and STIP
- 5) Provide adequate notice of public involvement activities
- 6) Hold meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- 7) Use visualization techniques in disseminating information
- 8) Place SWTP and STIP information on the internet
- 9) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input
- 10) Include a process for seeking out environmental justice groups
- 11) Provide for periodic review of the process
- 12) Allow 45 days for public comment when adopting and/or revising the process
- 13) Provide copies of the process to FHWA and FTA

In response to the 23 CFR Part 450.210 requirements, the GDOT Office of Planning has prepared this document to formally document our SWTP and STIP Public Involvement Processes. This Public Involvement Process is divided into two sections; Statewide Transportation Plan and State Transportation Improvement Program.

Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) Public Involvement Process

There will be a minimum of three meetings with the interested parties (citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, representatives of public transportation users, private providers of transportation, representatives of pedestrian walkway users, representative of bicycle facility users, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services). At the beginning of the SWTP update, the Department will host a series of "kick-off" meetings with the interested parties. The purpose of the "kick-off" meeting is to inform the interested parties of the purpose and importance of developing the SWTP; and assist in setting goals for the SWTP.

A meeting(s) will be held with the interested parties at the mid-point of the development of the SWTP to solicit input and provide information to the interested parties.

At the conclusion of the SWTP development, and prior to State Transportation Board adoption of the SWTP, a meeting(s) will be held with the interested parties to inform the group of the SWTP findings and recommendations.

All comments provided by the interested parties will be considered and responded to by the Department. All comments and GDOT responses to the comments will be made available to the interested parties at meetings and on the GDOT website.

The list of "interested parties" will be updated periodically as appropriate. Adding and subtracting interested parties from the list will not constitute opening the 45 day public comment period, required in 23 CFR 450.210(a)(2).

The interested parties will be notified in advance of all meetings by a letter from the State Transportation Planning Administrator transmitted via the U.S. Postal Service.

Meetings will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times, visualization techniques (such as: presentations, posters, hand-outs, etc.) will be utilized in the meetings to help facilitate the interested parties' understanding of the SWTP's disseminated information.

The SWTP and documents used in developing the SWTP (such as: meeting minutes, hand-outs, posters, presentations, etc.) will be posted on the GDOT website to help facilitate the interested parties' understanding of the SWTP's disseminated information.

Prior to beginning the SWTP update, a methodology by which to reach out to environmental justice groups (minority, low income) will be developed and utilized throughout the development of the SWTP.

The effectiveness of the SWTP Public Involvement Process will be reviewed following adoption of a SWTP by the State Transportation Board. As a result of this review; minor process changes will be automatically incorporated into the process, major changes will

result in a 45 day public review period of the proposed changes, prior to revising the process.

This process is separate and discreet from the Department's "Consultation Process With Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas of the State" (TOPPS 3145-1), which is in compliance with 23CFR Part 450.210(b).

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Public Involvement Process

The Department develops, and the State Transportation Board adopts, a STIP annually. Development of the STIP typically begins in the spring when the GDOT District Planning and Programming Engineers meet with rural elected officials in non-metropolitan areas of the state to discuss the "proposed project list" which ultimately develops into the STIP. Following these meetings, the Draft STIP is developed and presented to the State Transportation Board in August for their review. Following presentation of the Draft STIP to the State Transportation Board, GDOT Office of Planning staff provides the Draft STIP to the GDOT District Planning and Programming Engineers in order to commence the public involvement portion of the STIP development.

The District Planning and Programming Engineers are assisted in their public involvement endeavors by technical staff (presently a consulting firm, hired by the GDOT Office of Planning assists the District Planning and Programming Engineers, previously the Office of Planning contracted with the state's Regional Development Centers (RDCs) to provide technical assistance for the District Planning and Programming Engineers).

The District Planning and Programming Engineers and public involvement consultants schedule multiple public meetings throughout the non-MPO areas of the state, at convenient and accessible locations and times, in order to solicit substantive, meaningful comments. Invitations are mailed to each member listed in the GDOT Office of Planning's "Family of Partners Database". The Family of Partners Database lists over 5,600 individuals, elected officials, governmental agencies, special interest groups and others. The Department also places notices in local papers throughout the state to reach the public. Furthermore, the GDOT Office of Communications and GDOT District Communications Officers contact local newspapers in an effort to encourage the newspapers to publish articles concerning the upcoming meetings and the opportunity for the public to attend the meetings and voice their concerns and support.

At the public meetings, information is presented visually on poster sized maps depicting project locations within the counties. The Draft STIP is also placed on the Department's website providing open and continuous access to the information. Notices are also mailed to each library in the state, requesting the library to post the on-line Draft STIP address in a public location, so the general public can access the Draft STIP if desired.

Great effort is made to conduct all STIP public meetings at locations along ADA compliant bus routes, where appropriate. Efforts are also made to conduct STIP public meetings in and/or near environmental justice populations in order to ensure meaningful participation from these populations as required under Executive Order 12898 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its subsequent amendments.

All comments received by the GDOT STIP Project Manager, GDOT District Planning and Programming Engineers, and public involvement consultants, are forwarded to the appropriate office within GDOT for response. Each comment and response is documented and included in the STIP Public Involvement Report.

Every three years, the effectiveness of the STIP Public Involvement Process will be reviewed following adoption of the STIP by the State Transportation Board. As a result of this review; minor process changes will be automatically incorporated into the process, major changes will result in a 45 day public review period of the proposed changes, prior to revising the process.

This process is separate and discreet from the Department's "Consultation Process With Local Officials in Non-Metropolitan Areas of the State" (TOPPS 3145-1), which is in compliance with 23CFR Part 450.210(b).